



David Piercey, FRPSC

EXHIBITING AEROPHILATELY

Exhibitors in Canada have created some interesting and important air mail exhibits. A subsection of air mail, aerophilately, is all about exhibiting items that have been carried by airmail services. Your choices within this broad description are almost limitless, as there are so many ways to tell the story about airmail: whether a particular country or region, a particular era, the uses of airmail stamps, or airmail rates, to name just a few.

As the current *Manual of Philatelic Judging and Exhibiting* indicates, “aerophilately is aeropostal history.” Various postal history aspects – whether of rates, routes, markings, or means of airmail services – can all be considered. ‘Aerophilately’ is, however, not synonymous with ‘air mail.’ Any type of exhibit – whether of postal stationery (e.g., aérograms), air mail stamps, topical, thematic or display – can all be constructed as airmail exhibits. An aerophilately exhibit is just one type of air mail exhibit – that which directly and unequivocally addresses the postal history aspect of air mail.

Aerophilately exhibits have been around for many years now, and are specialized studies, important in their own right. Airmail exhibitors have led the innovations in exhibiting practices, as they were often the first exhibitors to include a wider variety of paper ephemera with their exhibits. For some time, this was frowned upon by more traditional exhibitors

(and judges), expecting to see only philatelic material on the pages, but such practices are now much more commonplace and acceptable within all general class exhibit categories.

The sorts of ephemera often encountered in aerophilatelic exhibits include items which directly relate to airmail services and include non-postal items that document air services such as schedules, photographs and perhaps even relevant newspaper clippings. As long as it advances the story, and does not overwhelm the philatelic material, such sorts of ephemera are fair game.

Like all general class exhibits, treatment, personal study and research, rarity and condition, and presentation all play a part in the exhibit’s favourable evaluation. A wide variety of covers showing origins, destinations, rates and usages should be included to demonstrate depth, diversity, and aerophilatelic knowledge. Commercially flown covers are more desirable than philatelically inspired flight covers, though, if only philatelic use is known, they should be included and identified for their importance.

Of paramount importance, like all exhibits, the aerophilatelic exhibit still must have a consistent storyline and all items selected must be relevant to the exhibitor’s intended storyline and plan.

Let’s take a look at a gold medal aerophilately exhibit by Sam Chiu of Toronto, Hong Kong Wartime

